PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

In This Issue

Paul D. Olmstead, whose article appears on Page 1, is director of the recreational program in the Alpine, Tenn., Larger Parish.

Murray L. Wagner, winner of the first award in the Virginia Rural Life Sermon Contest for several years, presents his 1949 prize-winning sermon on Page 3. Mr. Wagner is now pastor of a Church of the Brethren parish in Troy, Ohio.

C. Morton Hanna, Page 5, is pastor of a number of country churches, manager of several farms, and teacher at the Louisville Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

A revised statement on Comity Principles for Rural Churches is printed on Pages 8-9. This is presented in the hope that it will be widely studied and discussed. Reprints will soon be made available at rates which will be announced in an early issue of this periodical.

James Merlin, who tells about cooperative action in a Washington community—see Page 10—is minister of two Baptist churches and chairman of the Washington Town and Country Committee. His address is Box 435, Newport, Wash.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH presents its problems and needs on Page 13.

For information concerning the 1950 Convocation, see Page 16.

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"Wreck-reation" versus "Re-creation"

PAUL D. OLMSTEAD

• Aren't the adventures of youth the subject of conversation when old friends get together around an open fire? "You remember when we put crabby Uncle Bill's buggy on top of his barn? It was two days before he could find it." Pranks and jokes are a youthful necessity the world over, but here in Overton County, Tennessee, the stories and the pranksters never grow old. Wherever men gather in bad weather or on days off, these old and new stories are told.

Overton County has but one city, and that has less than 3,000 people in it. There is one movie and that specializes in westerns and crime stories. There are two pool rooms, a small roller-skating rink, and the high school gym which is used solely for basketball. Scattered throughout the rest of the county are small rural villages with a church, sometimes a grade school, and always at least one general store. In bad weather there is nothing but the general store where the men and boys gather. Here ideas for "wreck-reation" are dreamed up by the youth as they listen to the stories swapped by the men.

Throughout the county we see folkways, mores, and traditions which produce "wreck-reation" for our young people instead of "re-creation" which they need so badly. The church has taken a step in the right direction with its social gathering Sunday night. But there are six other days in the week during which our youth is demanding excitement.

The Alpine Recreation Association

I came to Alpine in the spring of 1946 to become a resident member of the church staff which was gathered here to relate Christian religion to everyday life through the development of community industries.

The Alpine high school closed in 1945. The gym, the school auditorium and the manual training and repair shop continued to be maintained for community use. For a while two men directed the use of the gym and the athletic field, but the program was soon stopped and the gym closed.

During this period of over a year the gang broke into the gym and destroyed lights, windows, locks and plumbing fixtures. They tore up the costly thermostat on the furnace. They turned on the water and left it running at all the faucets. They left lights on and used basement rooms for a hangout at night.

Toward Organization

My college was a teachers' training school. All my professors repeatedly told us to begin to teach where the learner was—not behind him and not ahead of him. This rule I put into practice in my campaign to make friends with the gang and its leader. It didn't take long for me to find out who the leader was and what boys were the most active members of the gang.

We had a snow that winter and the kids had nothing to slide on but their feet and the seat of their pants. I invited a couple into the shop after hours and we made a pair of crude skis. With another group we made a sled that would seat three. We tried it out behind the car and then left it over on the farm hill for all to use.

Early in '47 I had the men in the shop build a regulation ping-pong table. I bought the rest of the equipment and started teaching the game. The gang and its leader became interested, and some of them were playing most of the time. The leader was poor at it and I offered to teach him. He would come around three or four times a week and I would work with him. By the end of the spring he could beat me. During this coaching period he started coming to me for advice. As our friendship matured the activities of the gang decreased.

Forming the Association

Finally, in March 1948, a general meeting was called to discuss the organization. As chairman of the management committee, I reviewed the activities of the past six months

and pointed out the problems that had to be faced. I then suggested that the group organize as the Alpine Recreation Association; that they elect their officers and put committees to work for the good of all. I indicated all the advantages of such an organization. After considerable discussion I took a vote to see what proportion of the group wanted to run their own show. Forty young people and six adults raised their hands for it. This was a sweeping majority. We went ahead with the election of officers.

Soon the president called a working bee. Fifteen young people came, some of whom I had never seen raise a finger to help. That night and at later workings the following jobs were completed: window lights were replaced, a store room was built, a protecting cabinet was made for records and the player, window hinges were replaced, leaks were stopped in the roof, both basements were thoroughly cleaned and hosed, the gym floor was mopped, basement light fixtures were replaced and bulbs put in them, new grates were ordered and installed in the furnace, outdoor lights were installed high on both ends of the gym, twenty-six posts set three feet deep and standing two feet high above the ground were set between the walk at the front of the gym and the road to keep cars from parking on the walk, and three loads of crushed rock were put in front of the gym for a parking area.

Present and Future

The Alpine gymnasium is now being used by the following groups: Sunday afternoons the building is open to any who wish to use it. Every day during the week the Alpine grade school has the use of it for practice and games in the afternoon. Monday night older boys and young men have it for ball practice and games. Late Tuesday afternoons grade schools have practice. Early Tuesday evening the Alpine Younger Boys Independent Team practices. Later Tuesday evening are grade school and independent games. Wednesday nights the Alpine high-school-age boys have practice and games with similar teams in the county. Thursday nights the Allons grade school has the building for practice, gymnastics and games. Friday night is reserved for singing games and other parties arranged by the A.R.A. for the youth of the Alpine area.

The expenses of this program are met by charging each local group, except the grade school, fifty cents a night for practice. Each outside group pays $1.00 an hour for the use of the building. For the first time the A.R.A. is on firm financial ground with a bank balance of over $100.

Since the A.R.A. came into being there has been only one broken window light in the gym. It has been a long time since there has been any sign of gang "wreck-reation."

Rosa O. Hall Certificate

• Beginning in 1932, and each year since when the Northern Baptist Convention has had its annual meeting, The American Baptist Home Mission Society has awarded the Rosa O. Hall Certificate for Distinguished Service in Town and Country Church Work to those most deserving of the recognition.

Nine pastors from six states in the eastern area of the Convention received the Certificate this year. Each recipient had given more than ten years of service to rural church work and had been more than usually successful in his efforts. Those who received the 1950 award were:

Robert L. Clingan, pastor of the Alexandria, Ohio, Baptist Church from 1940-44; The Cortland Larger Parish from 1944-46; and the Genoa (N. Y.) Federated Church since 1946. Rapid increase in church attendance has been evident during his ministries.

Frederick P. Freeman, one-time missionary to Puerto Rico. Since 1939, Mr. Freeman has been pastor of The Federated Church, Becket, Mass. His ministry has been characterized by church building improvement, wide variety of community services and outreach in adjacent areas.

Charles A. Fuller, pastor of the Centerville (Pa.) Baptist Church since 1926. This church is sponsoring the families of Displaced Persons and is carrying on an intensive local religious and recreational program.

Harold E. Hammer has had thirteen years of rural-church experience in The Federated Church of Masonville, N. Y.; the Rio Grande College Rio Grande, Ohio; and the West Hoosick Baptist Church in New York State. Mr. Hammer inaugurated a rural life group at Rio Grande and is devoted to rural church work.

Mildred H. Huffman, pastor at East Winthrop, Maine, for twenty-two years. Her pastorate has brought about church building improvements and a warm-hearted church spirit. She is a specialist in Christian education and has been influential in state convention work.

J. Henry Rood. Reared on a New York State farm, Mr. Rood specialized in rural sociology after college and seminary training. Dedicated to rural church work, he has held pastorates at the Preston Hollow Baptist Church, N. Y., from 1939-45 and at the Groton Baptist Church, N. Y., since 1945. Mr. Rood is chairman of the Groton, N. Y., Council of Churches.

Richard J. Thomas has ministered to two parishes in Pennsylvania, and has been pastor of the New Milford Baptist Church since 1940. During the past ten years the budget for local expenses has increased from $2,300 to $7,000, and gifts to missions have increased from $125 to $1,000.

Edwin Lewis Thornton held pastorates in Rhode Island and New York from 1920-28 and in Vermont since 1929. Mr. Thornton has won the achievement award for five consecutive years. He is at present pastor of the North Springfield (Vt.) Baptist Church.

Vairl C. Winter, pastor of the Wirt County Baptist Parish in West Virginia, with churches at Elizabeth, Bethesda, Two Runs, Newark and Hill Grove. Mr. Winter has had twenty-three years of successful ministry. He teaches Bible courses in the high school and cooperates with community agencies.

The End of Summer

MURRAY L. WAGNER

(The following sermon won first award in the Rural Life Sermon Contest, conducted by the Virginia Council of Churches.)

• One of the glories of the Scripture lies in the timeless application of its teachings. Jeremiah observed in his days many situations which can be very closely paralleled in our own time. Public officials were unconcerned about public and individual welfare; priests thought more about their share of the offerings than about their sins; prophets busied themselves in preaching to itching ears and merchants flaunted their false weights and short measures.

Apparently Jeremiah hoped that the harvest season would bring the people back to God in thanksgiving for his abundant mercy, but when that time came the prophet complained that "the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved." Surrounded by their enemies, busying themselves with their pleasures and business, the people were sowing for a different kind of harvest.

Postponement Brings Disaster

Today we find ourselves promising to do great things "after harvest"; we country folk can say, "After harvest we'll have more time . . . ," more time to study God's Word; more time to sing the songs of Zion; more time to visit the sick neighbor; more time to study to show ourselves approved; more time to grow. But now we must first fill our silos; we must get the ground ready for sowing the wheat; we must fatten our steers; finish off the poultry, get in the winter wood—and then we'll attend to our spiritual needs. But then the words may have concluded, "the harvest is ended and we are not saved." We'll be lost!

Harvest-time is Coming

There is a philosophy going the rounds in recent years that the trend of human society is ever upward; we have our periods of moral depression but always we climb a bit higher in a spiral toward perfection.

Such an automatic and irresistible spiritual elevation is the theology of a wishful people who want a cover for their sins. It is the easy way; the soft comfortable way to heaven. Jeremiah had noted that "all Jerusalem is backsliding." There is no "sliding" upward or forward; it is always backward and downward.

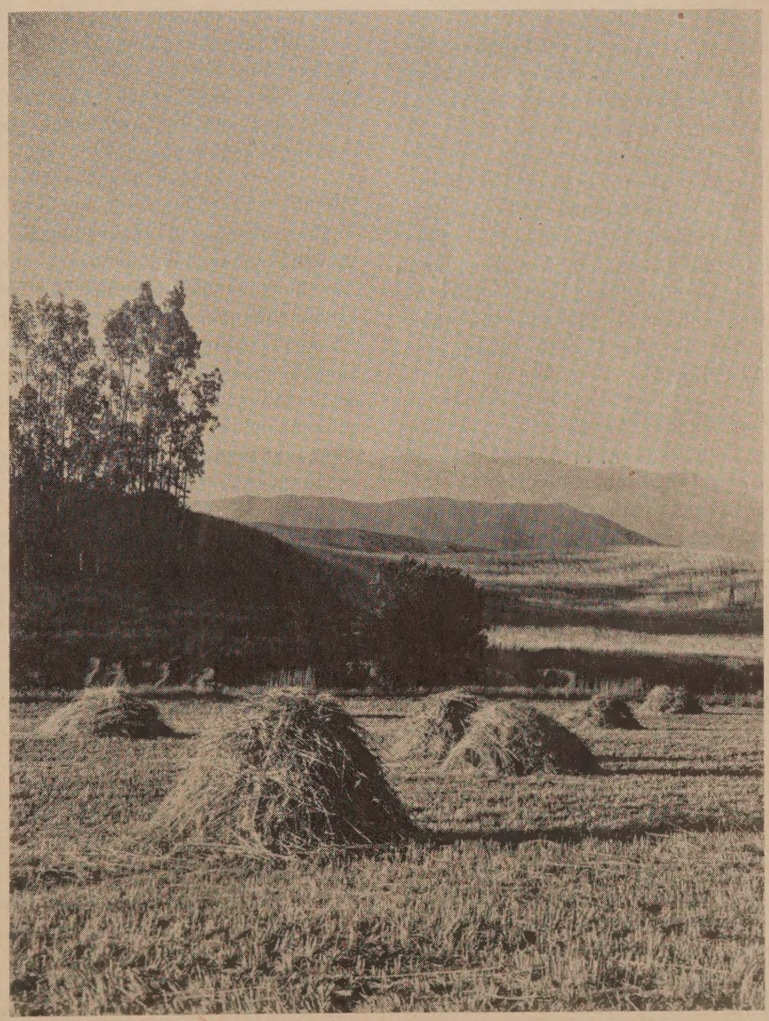
The growth toward God is a time-consuming struggle, a climb upward, bearing a cross and plodding on bleeding feet.

Spiritual Growth

In this day of speedy travel and instantaneous communication we need more than ever to take time to grow spiritually.

We need to consider how slippery is our footing personally and nationally. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall." An occasional hour in public worship is not enough time for those who wish to develop eternal values in their soul.

No matter how fine the machinery it can be justified only by the size and the nature of the harvest. We dare not invest more in machinery than the harvest justifies. To buy a thousand dollars' worth of equip-



Religious News Service Photograph

Harvest Time

ment to harvest a crop which could as readily be cradled will soon carry a man to bankruptcy. In a mechanical age it is easy to become more concerned with the combine than with the threshed grain.

Chief Job

Frequently we find churches so much engrossed in stained-glass windows, air-conditioning units, audio-visual aids and the like that they forget the real fields of whitening grain surrounding the church. We should have the very finest equipment available within our means, but our chief job is to save the harvest for the Lord of the harvest.

Never let it be forgotten that we are saved by grace and not by gadgets. Let sociologists measure our standard of living by bathtubs and television sets per capita; but the quality of living is not dependent upon standards of living. Washing machines and telephones, deep freeze lockers and pick-up balers must be tools for the attainment of a quality of life, not simply a standard of living. Let every farmer call together his family and bless the plow before it splits the sod and let him pray that the harvest may be for the glory of God and for the salvation of men and not simply for the increased bank account.

The Quality Life

Our world is needing a harvest of men of quality. Such are the world's hope and without them treaties, pacts, leagues and unions are of no avail. The quality life is not the product of gadgets or conveniences; it is from far deeper sources. Let us not confuse the machine with the harvest.

We have made much of our labor-saving devices. It is more or less reliably estimated that one farmer today produces as much as four men did in his grandfather's day. We shall not dispute the calculation. There faces us, however, the fact that our grandfathers were hard at work in the harvest fields of our Lord and we are not matching their vigor and their prayerful concern for this work. Can we be satisfied with doing less for the kingdom of God while we boast of doing four times as much in the physical harvest?

Balance

It is well known among people who love plant life that the root system must balance the leaf system. In transplanting trees and shrubs it is usually advisable to trim the branches a bit to balance the loss of roots. The thrifty, growing plant must have balance. There can be no satisfactory fruitage unless the branches, leaves and budding fruit are well fed from deep, active and vigorous roots.

The great trees of the forest, blown over in the storm, are not brought low because of their high crowns but because of shallow rootage; great men and women whom we have respected and whom we have called "good" may disappoint us and fall headlong during life's storms and we see that their roots were not as deep as we had supposed. The roots are the anchorage system for plant and for man.

Eternal Life

The springs of living water may spring up within us unto eternal life if we will but send our roots down through to the sure promises of God. Why will we live from smoky, leaky cisterns when we may have the water of life springing up within us?

A few summers have passed since some friends bought a home in the country. My first question was, "How's the water supply?" "Fine," I was told, "the well has never failed." Then this summer I visited my friend again and found him engaged in pumping water from his neighbor's well into his own. I chided him and reminded him of that never-failing well of which he had boasted.

"It's like this," he said, "that well never did fail since the house was built. But now we've put in a bathroom, put water in the poultry houses and in the kitchen. It takes a lot more water than this well was expected to produce." Now our friend will set the well driller over the old hand-dug well and sink a shaft until a new stream is struck to meet the needs of this new resident.

Sowing and Reaping

This is the story our generation must see; with our modern taxation upon our faith we find that our resources are not sufficient. We cannot go back to the old means of living but we will either draw our spiritual life from leaky, inadequate man-made cisterns or we will dig again, deeper, the wells of our fathers.

We must go deeper or we can bear no fruit; our branches can reach out no further; our leaf shall wither and whatsoever we do shall not prosper. The water is here; the tools for the digging are at hand and the divine imperative and the divine promise are the same as they have been since that day when He said, "I will give to him the living water."

What is the Fruit?

Summer's at its end; the harvest of this season is past. Yet we are aware that the stubble knows the breeze for only a short time until it is turned under in preparation for the sowing unto the next harvest.

Life is a ceaseless sowing and reaping. But there is one final, all-inclusive harvest for each one of us. At that time the issue will be clear and it will be simple: What is the fruit? Upon this hangs the eternal destiny, and all the machinery, conveniences, the money and popularity, the education and the grooming, the authority and cleverness will not tilt the beam in our favor when the harvest has come.

Only the fruitage; and the fruitage depends on the rootage. Is it worth the deeper digging and the fuller drinking at the never-failing wells of eternity?

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Your Harvest Festival

• If you have overlooked ordering *An Order of Service for a Harvest Festival* for this year, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the office of the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5c each; 100 copies, $1.00; 250 copies, $2.05. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

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More Family Farms Or Better Rural Families?

C. MORTON HANNA

• There is a battle going on between informed persons on rural affairs. Some insist that for economical production with modern farm machinery the farm must become larger. The farmer with small acreage must rely on a large amount of hand labor and cannot compete with the farmer who has an acreage which will enable him to make economical use of expensive machinery. On the other hand others insist that we keep in mind the tremendous values of farming as a way of life and maintain the family-type farm at all cost.

The 1945 census of agriculture seemed to indicate that the trend is in line with the ideas of those farming the large farm. The really big farms, those of 1,000 acres or more, have increased rapidly in the last twenty-five years until they now contain 40% of the nation's farm land. The majority of these farms employ a high percentage of hired labor and carry on commercial agriculture. The problem farms of from ten to one hundred acres were on the decrease. Some of these farms have made money during the war years, but in the years ahead many of them may be combined into larger units for more economical production.

Decline of Family-Size Farms

The aftermath of World War II may bring a further decline in the number of farms which are operated by single families with a minimum of hired labor. All efforts put forth to increase the income of the family-type farm will also operate to make the larger farm more profitable and so tend to combine small farms into larger and more efficient units, which can make efficient use of improved farm machinery.

The demand for cheaper food for a nation which is becoming more and more urban and the necessity of competing for an export market will force American farmers towards increasingly efficient production. Already 10 per cent of the farms produce about 50 per cent of the food and fibre produced for sale. The highly mechanized efficiency of these farms enable them to produce at a price which at times is unprofitable to the other 90 per cent of the farms. Only those family-type farms producing certain crops which lend themselves to this sort of situation will be able to maintain a standard of living which will produce the human values usually thought of in connection with the family-type farm. The marginal farms, about one-half the total number of farms, do not produce a way of life which conserves the human values usually associated with the family-farm ideal.

A study by a special committee of the U. S. Senate[1] of the effect of scale of farm operations shows quite conclusively that large-scale commercial farming, under existing conditions, is destructive to human values in that it lowers the quality of community life. An article in the "New Republic,"[2] commenting on this study, had this to say: "Large-scale, big-business, corporation, absentee-ownership farming is like a rotten apple that ruins the whole barrel. It not only rots the people on the land but ruins those who are dependent on the people who work the land. While it may produce big food and fibre crops, it ruins the boy and girl crops in small towns and on the farm because it makes it difficult for anybody but a rich farmer to have a home. And a home is pretty important."

Need for Re-Study

Since all of those who are interested in farming as a way of life are losing the battle to those who are interested in farming as a way of producing cheap food and fibre for the consumer, it behooves the former group to re-examine the total situa-

[1] "Small Business and the Community," 79th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Committee Print No. 13.

[2] Issue of February 3rd, 1947.

tion to see if they have clearly defined the issue involved. *Is it the family-type farm that we want to maintain or is it rather a way of life that has seemed in the past to be associated with the family-type farm situation?*

The number of farms under ten acres has increased during the last twenty-five years, and the indications are that this way of living on the land will greatly increase in the years ahead. Here close association with the soil and the advantages of living in a rural area can be enjoyed by an increasing number of people. At the same time they can enjoy the security which comes from having an income from a non-farm source. It is likely that an effort to recapture the advantages and blessings of rural life for this large segment of the population could be an outstanding success.

One of the major social problems usually associated with farm labor and the farm tenant is insecurity of tenure. The tenant usually rents for one year at a time, the farm laborer may feel even less secure in his job. This feeling of impermanence on the part of the renter and the agricultural laborer keeps him from taking an active interest in the community and its institutions. Not so many years ago the industrial laborer was in much the same position, but today the industrial laborer is much more secure in his job tenure and as a result he has become a part of the community in which he lives. This has been accomplished in part through the labor union and social security. Perhaps the agricultural laborer and the sharecropper need group action to attain the security of job tenure and better wages which would make him a part of the community in which he lives and so lead to his support of community institutions and participation in community affairs.

If there could be coupled with security of tenure an increase in income for the renter and the agricultural laborer, the rural standard of living could be raised and so make possible the more adequate support of rural institutions. The extension of the benefits of Wages and Hours legislation to cover agricultural workers would in the long run benefit the owner-operator of the family size farm, since he is not only an owner-operator but also a laborer.

Maintaining Rural Institutions

We must frankly recognize that we cannot have a good way of life in rural areas unless rural institutions are greatly strengthened. We must have better rural schools, churches, recreation and medical care. It is difficult for rural people to pay the entire cost of providing these services for themselves for at least three reasons:

(1) The per capita cost of maintaining rural institutions is disproportionately high because of the low density of the rural population. It is estimated that a population of 30,000 to 50,000 is essential to economically support a health department. Less than half of the counties of the nation have that much population. It is estimated that a constituency of 1,000 is essential to the support of an adequate church program. Only a small percentage of our rural communities have that large a constituency per rural parish. The per capita cost of operating rural schools is very high due to transportation costs and also to the size of the constituency.

(2) The income of rural people is very much lower than that of urban people. This is a well-known fact and needs no elaboration.

(3) The dependency load of rural people is very high. This means that comparatively few adults must support institutions for the many who are either too young or too old to be economically productive.

If we are to have adequate rural institutions they must be strengthened by taxes derived from urban property and urban incomes. This is in no way unfair to urban peoples but is rather a just charge for benefits accruing to the cities from rural urban migration. It is a well-known fact that rural families produce a surplus of children who will in the end find their way to the cities to add to urban wealth. A part of the expense of rearing and educating these children is a proper tax charge against city wealth.

In the past we have observed that great good accrued to the nation from the way of life on the family farm. It is high time for some extensive and careful research to be carried on to discover just what elements in the family-farm situation produced the good life and how those elements can be maintained in the new rural economy.

We now have many more people living in rural areas *not on farms* than we have people on farms. It is entirely possible that the virtues which we have in the past associated with the family farm could be maintained among the increasing per cent of the population who choose to live in rural areas—but who do not make their living on the farm. Emphasis on a better way of life for all people living in rural areas could conceivably make possible for all families living in rural areas the virtues we have in the past associated with the family farm.

Perhaps we will discover that we can retain the virtues of the farm family even though we lose the family farm. It is an intriguing thought and worthy of further study.

Dairy Farmers

• Sponsored by the Emerald Grove (Wisconsin) Congregational Church, a study has recently been made of dairy farmers and their neighbors in Wisconsin. The findings of the study group are entitled "What Does it Mean to be a Christian Dairy Farmer?" They were prepared and published by Shirley E. Greene, Agricultural Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action, Congregational Christian Churches, Merom, Indiana.

This study group's conclusions of the Christian dairy farmers' principles of land use and conservation, community functions, marketing practices, government and other economic group services are offered as a challenge and a stimulus to other groups of Christian dairy farmers and other farm commodity groups.

owdermilk on Rural Missions

Protestant mission schools in Afca need to reorient their curricula order to channel African native nbitions along more practical lines nd into more productive occupaons, Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk, rmer missionary educator in China nd noted soil conservationist, deared recently.

Addressing a luncheon sponsored y Agricultural Missions, Inc., Dr. owdermilk said that mission hools, along with the "false goals" t up by the white man in Africa, ave stimulated native ambitions for areers as politicians, clerks and hite collar workers at the expense f more practical professions.

"As a result," Dr. Lowdermilk coninued, "the natives do not have any lesire to enter such professions as civl or mechanical engineering, agriculural engineering, or just plain dirt arming. This kind of attitude, for vhich some mission schools are partly responsible, is inadequate for an ntelligent adjustment to the pressng problems of the African environment."

Characterizing Africa as "a land vhere so little is being done in the face of so much," Dr. Lowdermilk recommended that governments and missions undertake the development of "rural reconstruction pilot projects."

Such projects, he said, might well serve as a part of President Truman's widely discussed Point IV proposal. He said that these projects should aim to increase the productivity of the land and of the individual; stimulate the manufacturing of equipment, such as vehicles, tools, and farm implements, and seek to improve village facilities, such as transportation, hospitals, roads, water supply and sanitation.

Dr. Lowdermilk stressed the need for a larger recruitment of agricultural missionaries to serve "as pioneers in building the Kingdom of God on this Holy earth." He reported that in parts of Central Africa, where Protestant missions own large tracts of land, not a single agricultural missionary is available to demonstrate what can be done with the land.

Town Church Conference at Baldwin, Kansas

Methodist Town Church Conference

• A conference which considered specifically the function and the responsibility of the town church was held at Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, in July of this year. The conference was called by the Town and Country Department of the Methodist Church to consider population centers of 2,500 to 10,000.

This conference and a similar one held last year at Lynchburg, Virginia, were called because of the conviction that a new type of sociological problem in "towns" of this size had not been given proper attention. In conferences on the urban church the larger centers receive all the attention, in spite of the fact that the Bureau of the United States Census classifies all centers of population over 2,500 as "urban." At the same time, most people think of "rural" as open country or perhaps small villages.

Small committees had been at work for several months before the conference, each considering a special type of town which had been assigned to it and gathering materials for discussion. These preliminary findings kept the study groups busy and furnished the major portion of the reports. Typing of towns was difficult. Materials showed that the towns could not be clearly typed, for the classifications were seldom as definitive as first appearances suggested. One significant lesson learned from the conference was that more attention needed to be given to determining the distinctive characteristics of towns. Only after such characteristics have been clearly defined can the churches plan ways of ministering effectively.

The sub-committees which did the advance preparation for this conference served as the nucleus for the study groups, which considered the following types of towns: college; fishing and shipping; county seat; mining and oil; manufacturing; resort; agricultural; and commuter. The result was a sharply focused attention. Such conferences are the raw material out of which sound theory can be built.

The conference's greatest weakness was the failure to recognize or to bear its fair portion of responsibility for the ecumenical movement, although several of the leaders saw this weakness and admitted it.

Dr. Glenn F. Sanford, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y., expects to prepare a report on the findings of these conferences. This report will be "must reading" for every pastor of a "town" church; and it should receive careful study by official boards as well.

—Don F. Pielstick

Churching the Rural Community Cooperatively

(Approved by the Commission on Comity Principles at the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country—November 8-10, 1949 —and by the National Congress on Home Missions—January 24-27, 1950.)

• This document is a revision of an earlier statement on comity for rural churches. There are numerous reasons for this new version. The social patterns of rural life are changing. Modern transportation and communication have not only largely freed rural people of isolation but have subjected them to the pressures of commercialism, urbanization and secularism. The impact of change demands alert cooperation of the churches if the gospel is to be propagated effectively today among rural people.

Certain obvious elements of the rural scene are recognized as affecting our Protestant responsibility:

1. Communities are emerging with centers of population numbering from 2,000 to 2,500. In the process of emerging, these communities often absorb functions of the neighborhoods which provide the bases for their social life, thereby creating instability of organizations during the transition period.

2. There is a continuing need for the Christian church which has struggled valiantly to put spiritual and moral foundations under the individual. The same evangelical spirit must penetrate each unit of the social pattern: the family, the neighborhood and the community.

3. It has long been recognized that to Christianize the individual it is necessary to strengthen the spiritual and moral foundations of the family, and that to strengthen the family the neighborhood must be sound, and for neighborhoods to be wholesome the community must have spiritual and moral foundations.

4. To effectively strengthen the neighborhood, all churches therein should plan cooperatively for a program of spiritual and moral significance, effective at the neighborhood level. In like manner, all the churches of a community should plan together for the spiritual welfare of the community. Interchurch planning is unnecessary only when one church has the exclusive occupancy of a community. Otherwise, interchurch planning is required of the rural church in order to provide more adequate spiritual and moral foundations in each realm of society. The following principles, when observed in parish and field administration, should assist the rural church to move forward in meeting the new demands placed upon it:

I. Exclusive Occupancy

Where an area is exclusively occupied by one church, that church shall see to it that the sacraments or ordinances are administered and the program diversified to meet the varied needs of all Protestants in the area.

Such a church must be willing to receive into Christian fellowship all evangelical Christians without submitting them to doctrinal or other tests which do not accord with the standards of their respective faiths and shall provide for them full membership or membership through affiliation or association.

(A) Maximum occupancy shall not exceed one church for each 1,000 population potentially homogeneous and reasonably accessible to the church building location.

(B) The minimum standard of service and equipment for such a church shall be:

(1) Resident pastor devoting full time to the work of the ministry;

(2) Public worship and religious training every Sunday;

(3) Annual vacation church school;

(4) Youth programs;

(5) Adequate program of community service;

(6) Edifice reasonably adequate to meet the needs of the community for worship, religious training and service.

(C) Exclusive occupancy may be achieved in cooperation with the local people in the following ways:

(1) Through comity assignment by the comity committee of a state council of churches (a denominational community church).

(2) Through unconditional withdrawal of all other churches in favor of the one given exclusive occupancy. This may be achieved by denominational executives arranging for reciprocal exchange of fields.

(3) Through the formation of a federated church.

(4) Through the formation of a non-denominational church administered by an interdenominational body.

II. Joint Occupancy

Competition shall be said to exist in a jointly occupied field when: (1) a church in such a field receives aid without planning jointly with the other churches for the complete religious life of all Protestants in the community (such competition shall be removed either by the church entering into joint planning or by the cessation of the support in aid); or when (2) any one of the churches shall fail to provide the following minimum service:

A minister accessible for pastoral care;
Weekly worship and religious education;
An annual vacation church school;
A women's organization;
A Youth Program.

Such competition can be removed by entering into joint planning with the other churches of the community to provide jointly any separate item of this program in which the church was previously deficient.

Joint cooperative planning shall be said to exist when:

(1) Each church names representatives to a central committee which initiates plans in which all churches participate, both in program ar-

ngements and personnel, such as a ommunity-wide religious census, ecial evangelical meetings, commu- ity vacation church school, week- ay religious education, united urch canvass; and when (2) the rofessional leadership of the urches are selected in joint con- ltation so as to provide the widest ange of capabilities and skills, with ne understanding that each leader s responsible to the entire commu- ity in the area of his or her special apabilities and skills.

Such cooperative planning may nd expression in an organization uch as a larger parish, a pastoral nity or a group ministry.

II. *Mission Aid*

Master List Agreement
(From the national board)

Each board will, in whatever man- ner it deems appropriate, notify its denominational representatives, in each state for which the compilation of data is completed, as to the fields of that denomination which appear to be competitive, to permit verifica- tion, correction, or amplification of the data in hand.

The boards or their appropriate state bodies or local ecclesiastical unit will jointly submit all fields which appear to be competitive for consideration and adjudication by the Comity Committee of the State Home Missions Council or Council of Churches, where such a body exists.

The boards will unite in request- ing the appointment of a special Joint Comity Committee in each state which does not now have a state Council with the understand- ing that such special Committee will represent at least those five denom- inations or as many of them as have work within the bounds of the given state. In such cases the fields which appear to be competitive will be sub- mitted to the special Joint Comity Committee for consideration and ad- judication.

Each board agrees to limit its grant to any field named on these Master Lists which appears to be competitive to the period ending October 31, 1935, pending considera- tion of such fields and recommenda- tion thereon in accordance with par- agraphs 2 and 3.

Each board will urge that a sim- ilar procedure be approved by its denominational units which conduct their Home Missions work outside the budget of the board or which make supplementary grants to aided fields.

The boards will request the co- operation of the Executive Secretary of the Home Missions Council in the follow-up of these cases. If possible, arrangement will be made to have one board representative and the sec- retary of the Home Missions Council meet with each state group when these fields are considered.

Master List Agreement (By state con- ference or synodical organization)

Each denominational executive of a state conference council or synod- ical organization will compile a list of all churches regularly receiving mission aid, sustentation, or mini- mum support funds.

The executives will jointly submit these lists of all fields receiving aid for consideration and adjudication to the Comity Committee of the state council of churches, or other administrative body.

The executives agree to eliminate competitive grants in aid at the earliest possible date.

A new enterprise shall be initiated with missionary support only in ac- cordance with points I and II.

Mission aid for building purposes shall be given only in accordance with point II.

In the expenditure of missionary money in the town and country field the following objects should be re- garded as of primary importance:

(1) As a first responsibility to build up the highest type of service standard for each church which now has or which is proposed to have the exclusive responsibility for the field.

(2) To strengthen, particularly, churches which face situations of un- usual difficulty or unusual strategic importance.

(3) To adequately occupy now unoccupied communities and to serve now unreached populations.

Where the work of a church is to be discontinued, the policy should be to dissolve its organization and unite its membership with other existing churches and to make a deci- sion as to disposal of the abandoned building or buildings, in a manner which will not create new competi- tion.

IV. *Method of Implementation*

No set of principles agreed to is of value unless a plan of procedure is also agreed upon. The following plan is an essential minimum to make this set of principles set forth in II effective on the local church level.

1. The Home Missions Council in official session is requested to adopt these principles and refer them to its constituent denomina- tions for action.

2. Upon the adoption of these principles each denominational board is requested to notify its state conference or synodical executive of such action, urging that each eccle- siastical unit in official session also adopt these principles.

3. The Home Missions Council upon being notified of denomina- tional approval should notify the state councils of such action, urging them to seek adoption of these prin- ciples in official session.

4. Both the state conference or synodical organization and the state council of churches should carry on a program of education to inform the local churches concerning the adoption of this set of principles and their significance.

5. Upon adoption by the Home Missions Council, the Committee on Town and Country shall be en- couraged to:

(a) approach all seminaries of the denominations having concurred in these principles in an effort to have an understanding of these prin- ciples as a part of the education of all ministers;

(b) approach all program com- mittees planning In-Service Train- ing curriculum, asking them to make a place on the program for a pres- entation of these principles;

(c) approach the program com- mittee of the Association of Council Secretaries, seeking a place on this program at the earliest possible date.

Cooperative Action

JAMES E. MERLIN

• In December, 1948, a new church was organized in the panhandle of Idaho with a charter membership of twelve "stump-ranchers," people whose farms consisted of logged-off lands in the Priest River valley. At the end of one year they had built to the point where their resources had given out. A fine, two-story block building stood on a prominent point on the highway at a "Y" north of the town of Priest River. (One arm of the "Y" reaches northeast to include most of the original members, and looks toward a large potential constituency. The other reaches toward a large unchurched population spread out for fifty miles to the north, and on to the Canadian border.) But the building, with rafters up, lacked a roof, and with frames in, lacked the glass for windows.

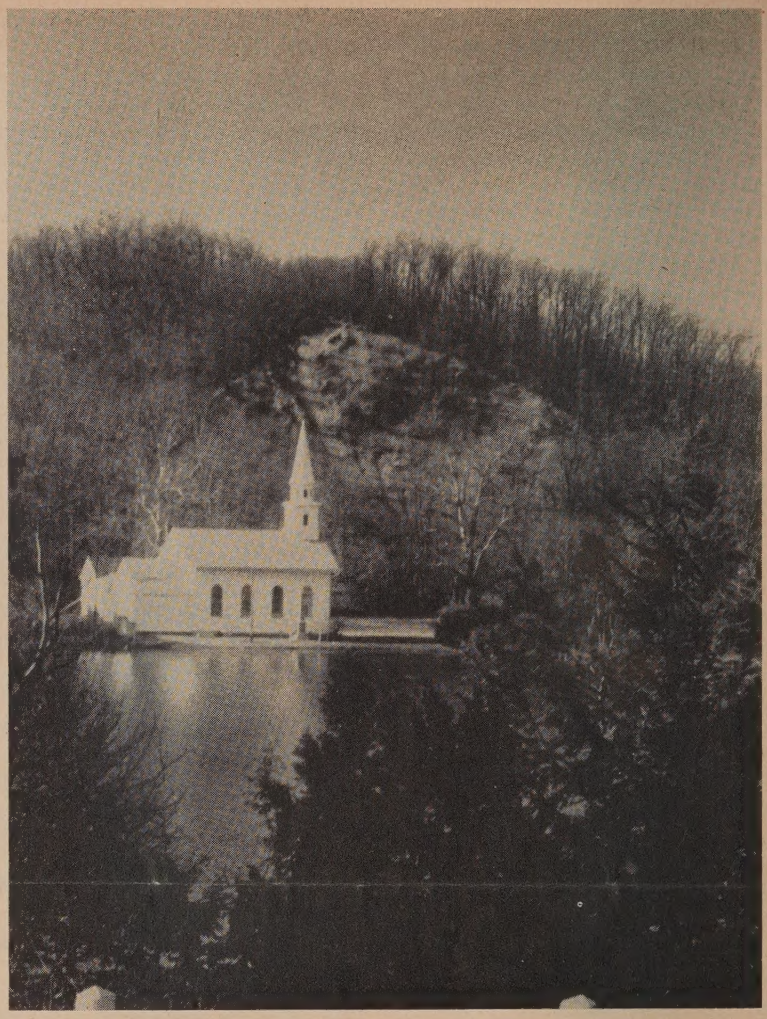
"Big Brother"

At this point, one of Walla Walla's prominent Baptist ministers learned of the need and caught a vision of brotherhood between the two churches. In each division of his church's work the need was presented, the minister urging "a broader and deeper and more loyal missionary stewardship."

The pastor and his family set an example by changing from their previous custom of sending Christmas greetings printed on a card with a family picture to a mimeographed letter presenting the need in Idaho for a financial lift. Their personal contribution was to be the $30 or $40 difference from their previous type of greeting card.

The response was remarkable. One friend from as far as California sent a substantial check. In all, the Walla Walla church raised over $350 for this project. Now a roof and window glass are assured, and the church in the panhandle of Idaho will soon be completed.

The Washington Baptist Town and Country Committee is urging that churches of its state, whatever their size, try to act as "Big Brothers" to some less fortunate church, for this plan is but the outpouring of the love of Christ into the hearts of His people. It has an advantage over man-made plans in that it requires no set-up of committees, expensive promotion, or overhead expenditures.



Religious News Service Photograph

Farming in Eastern Europe

• The regimes of Eastern Europe are now openly committed to a policy of collectivizing agriculture.

Critics have pointed out that conditions in Eastern Europe differ essentially from those in Russia, where collectivization was connected with a drive to increase considerably the area under cultivation. The orbit countries have no new areas for agrarian development and population settlement.

Under these conditions collectivization and mechanization of agriculture would make economic sense only if they were connected with plans for the removal of considerable manpower to other pursuits. But current industrialization plans do not call for the absorption of spectacular numbers of new workers in the next few years.

It is possible, however, that the governments of Eastern Europe will decide to retain large acreages under their direct management until the ferment caused by the transition to collective farming has subsided.

The excerpts given above were taken from *Foreign Policy Reports* (issue of April 1, 1950), a publication of the Foreign Policy Association, Inc., 22 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

The Irish Agricultural Organization Society

"The Irish Agricultural Organization Society is the cooperative agricultural organizing and propaganda body in Eire. It has organized practically all the cooperative creameries, agricultural societies, credit societies and other rural cooperative societies in Ireland. It continues to form societies and to help those already formed with advice, information, inspection. Its interests are the interests of those who live by or out of agriculture."

This announcement published in the latest report of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society is also a summary of its activities and program.

The prime mover in establishing the organization was Sir Horace Plunkett, who became known in America as a result of visits and publications, and also for putting into circulation here the slogan, "Better farming, better business, better living."

It is known that Sir Horace Plunkett conferred with President Theodore Roosevelt, concerning farm conditions and rural life in both Ireland and America. It is said that Sir Horace made a suggestion to President Roosevelt which led to the latter's appointment of the Commission on Country Life in 1908. That Commission reported in 1909, about forty years ago, and President Roosevelt sent a special message to Congress transmitting the report. It was originally printed as a Senate document.

Organization

Sir Horace had encouraged the formation of local cooperative associations. Soon experience indicated that some form of a central organization was absolutely necessary. Sir Horace returned to Ireland from a visit to the United States in 1889 convinced that there should be a body formed "first to establish cooperative societies among the farmers and then when established to advise and guide them."

The Society was organized in 1894 and drew its first sustenance from gifts by "Sir Horace Plunkett's friends." Later a government grant came from the Department of Agriculture, which also owes its existence to Sir Horace. Over the years the Society has gone on, sometimes with voluntary gifts alone, sometimes with gifts plus a government grant. The latest report discloses both sources of income.

There are two main types of cooperatives in rural Ireland, the creameries that produce butter and the agricultural societies that purchase supplies for their members. At the end of 1947 there were 238 local cooperative creameries with total sales valued at over £13,863,000. There were 76 agricultural purchasing societies with a total business of over 1,720,000 pounds.

Twenty local cooperatives have established chick hatcheries, one has built an artificial insemination center. Miscellaneous societies numbered only 19, but they had a total turnover of 1,521,000 pounds. There were also twenty-two credit societies with a turnover of 3,630 pounds.

The gross membership in the agricultural cooperatives was recently 96,713 persons in over 300 local societies. Many farmers belong to more than one cooperative. In 1894 there were thirty-four societies with 1,650 members.

One of the great personalities associated with the Irish agricultural cooperative movement was George W. Russell, known in the literary world as "AE." "AE" was a poet and a painter, an editor and a pamphleteer, a cooperator acquainted with dairy barns. For many years prior to his death he edited the periodical, *The Irish Homestead.*

As editor of *The Irish Homestead,* "AE" had experiences similar to those of other editors—there were times when he felt he had to write too much of the material himself. Thus on occasion he put into an issue various writings by himself, using a number of pen names. According to one of "AE's" biographers, he once signed an article with the word "Aeon." A printer made a mistake and simply set "AE." Mr. Russell left the printer's error stand, and thereafter the initials were frequently associated with his name. There have been those who surrounded the pen name with much mystery, and there were even those who thought that AE stood for agricultural economics.

The headquarters of the Society is at Plunkett House, Dublin. The present officers are Rev. E. J. Cayne, S.J., president, and Henry Kennedy, secretary.

—B. Y. L.

San Joaquin Valley

• A study of "The Agricultural Labor Force in the San Joaquin Valley, Calif.," as of 1948, has been published recently by the United States Department of Agriculture.. The study was made under the joint auspices of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the U.S.D.A. and the Institute of Industrial Relations of the University of California. It was prepared by William H. Metzler, Social Science Analyst, BAE, and Afife F. Sadin, Research Assistant of the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California.

The labor force studied included from 90,000 to 100,000 persons in parts of nine counties of the Valley. Characteristics of the workers, occupational backgrounds, mobility and housing conditions were given consideration. Practically all workers were interviewed at their homes or in their housing quarters at camps.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

"Agricultural Policy Statement No. 1"

• The Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches has adopted a statement, published under the title above, available from the Agricultural Relations Department, Merom, Ind. The statement is on "agricultural production, price and income policy." It is probably the first comprehensive statement from any church group on the subject.

After noting that the issues raised by the farm situation are ethical and spiritual, the Council presents "guiding objectives," for the consideration of Congress, the farm organizations and the public, in the formulation of programs "for commercial agriculture." Only a few aspects of the statement can be referred to in this summary.

"The program should be conducive to conservation. . . . Conservation and efficient use shall complement each other.

"The program should lead to organized, sustained and realistic abundance in production. . . .

"The program should encourage efficient processing and distribution with no more than reasonable and equitable margins of profit for processors and distributors. . . . A satisfactory program must . . . provide a close government check on monopolistic practices which lead to excessive margins of profit in agricultural processing and distribution. Continued public and private support of the cooperative movement will aid materially. . . .

"The program should provide adequate protection against unduly low and sharply fluctuating farm prices and incomes. . . .

"The program should perpetuate the pattern of efficient, owner-operated family farming. . . .

"The program should be democratic in administration . . ., accompanied by only such governmental controls as are necessary to provide equity to farmers and protection to the public interest."

The Council recognizes that a statement in terms of policy for commercial agriculture does not refer to the needs of those farmers who "operate outside and below the commercial channels, who have very few resources per farm and who have virtually nothing to sell at any prices." The program enunciated does not deal with the needs of farm laborers. For these, it is maintained, additional governmental programs are essential, and the needs of these groups will be dealt with later.

A Country Church Movement

• A recent editorial in the Federal Council *Bulletin* contained the following:

"There is a country church movement in the United States, without headquarters or budget. It is one of the most real things in the churches because its manifestations are spiritual. It is fed and nurtured by the sacrifices of unsung ministers and their wives and of equally unsung and devoted lay people. It goes on and on because men and women, clergy and laity, are relating the Christian religion to human need. It is a force that sustains the visible institutions that work to improve the rural church situation."

Church Women

• More than half of an estimated 50,000,000 American Protestant church members are women, according to a folder being distributed to local and state councils of church women across the country.

The folder is being used in connection with a project to put a million American church women on record in favor of Christian cooperation. The project, called the Ecumenical Register of Church Women, is sponsored by the interdenominational United Council of Church Women.

One of the objectives of the Register is to enable the church women to stand up and be counted for their interest in the ecumenical movement —"the whole church in the whole world"—before the United Council joins other interdenominational agencies to form the new National Council of Churches of Christ in late November.

Farm Youth Exchange

• A number of farm and youth organizations in North America, Latin America, and Europe had a part this year in giving rural young people an opportunity to learn firsthand something about farm life in other countries. Groups such as the 4-H Club (United States), Cercle des Jeunes (France), Young Farmers Club (England), Macra ne Feirme (Ireland), and others provided money for boys and girls from their respective countries to participate in the International Farm Youth Exchange Project.

The United States Department of Agriculture, coordinating agency for the project, announced that about forty young people from the United States spent the summer on farms in European countries and about forty boys and girls from Europe and Latin America were welcomed to farms in the United States. The young people, ranging from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, were assigned to different farm families where they took a regular part in the family life.

Cooperating in the exchange agreements were: Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and Uruguay.

This is the third year that the International Farm Youth Exchange program has been in operation.

Rural Missions

• There are about 120,000 rural churches in the "under-developed nations of the world," John H. Reisner of Agricultural Missions recently told a seminar on rural life. These churches have about 12,000,000 members. There are about 100,000 Christian pastors, evangelists and Bible women. There are between 50,000 and 60,000 teachers in village schools under church auspices. At present 66 technically trained agricultural missionaries are maintained in other lands by foreign mission boards of the U.S.A.

This Voyage of Discovery

During the summer there was opportunity to reflect on the voyage of discovery of the periodical, TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, which was launched with a sample issue in September, 1943. The good ship started when the paper supply was under restriction, and could be only in the form of an informal series of papers for a while. At war's end, the good ship was formally entered as a periodical.

The purpose of the voyage, printed monthly, was: To encourage cooperation among rural churches; to improve the administration of the rural church; to contribute to a Christian philosophy of rural life. It was also planned that the periodical should be closely linked with the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

The log of the voyage contains the following:

The periodical has become the means of recording the discussions at the Convocation.

Many items on the town and country church appearing in the religious and farm press generally have been digested for the readers of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. This process has revealed that there is a good deal of material on the rural church in the religious press, and not, as some think who do not dig, that there's nothing.

The pictures that symbolize our rural drive and emphasis are now largely purchased from professional photographers. Along with other publishers, we have found that informal snapshots often do not reproduce well. We would still like to have snaps to consider, however.

Those who work in the local church can write about it better than they know. But they often hesitate to send in items because they think there's nothing unusual about their parishes. But TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is interested in the usual, and does not, we hope, go in for the trend in the press generally to deal with the unusual. Thus you, dear reader, are invited not only to subscribe but to write for this journal.

There is news floating around all the time, but our nets get only a small proportion of it. That's because our nets are not wide enough, we haven't the time to do a systematic job of news gathering, and you don't always think of getting it to us via a postage stamp and a sheet of paper.

What is the unique thing anyway about this periodical? We are asked that, and may be asked it oftener, if the mood in cooperative church circles continues to be concentration and coordination. Before answering we look around and find that many other people than we have responsibility for the town and country church—and we're glad of that. In this particular voyage we seem to have been charged with responsibility *for accenting the ways whereby religious people confront, live in and serve the rural community*. We try to make important aspects of this charge interesting. If you read what we put out, you are moved; if you act, then the task is performed.

This country church movement is, we rejoice, a thing of the spirit. That is, it is so in its highest reaches and best moments. We'll hold that the realest movement has neither headquarters, nor budget, nor coordination. The movement of the spirit is maintained by the sacrifices of those who work in the local churches of the land while the church at large has gone along the easiest way of conforming to an urbanizing trend. This visible thing, a sheet named TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, is at its best when it recognizes where the truest important contributions to the movement are made.

It is easier to secure material on the agricultural part of "rural" than on the town segment. For one thing, the U.S.D.A. turns out stuff in big volume on farming but not on village life. Therefore, you men and women of the towns should especially help us round out our pages.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is only one of at least eight points of the program of the Committee on Town and Country. Thus at times it has a willing spirit rather than thorough craftsmanship because there just isn't time available to bring out a paper the way we know it should be done.

Last but not least, the financial aspects. We launched with eight pages an issue for $1.00 per year. While we lived that way we got enough dollars to pay for printing and distribution. Then we "made an act of faith" early in 1947, and doubled the size of the paper while keeping the subscription rate. We could foresee willing cooperation all around but not the fact that costs of production were going up relentlessly. We also did not look around to note that many journals were increasing their subscription rate without adding to the pages. (That's because we're part of the country church movement.)

Thus we push the bow into the waves in the fall of 1950, by having to spend about $1.35 for each subscription for which we charge $1.00. The cooperating boards of home missions make grants for operations that now pay the difference. We go on this way because nobody wants to change $1.00 per. At least, nobody with power to make a motion has yet made one. We may have to face other courses of action: 1. Cut back to eight pages and break even again; 2. Or, raise the subscription rate to try to match costs; 3. Or, print six times a year instead of nine, or adopt some other frequency that will cost less than the present schedule.

There's a fourth. There are 3,000 counties in the U.S. If we could receive one new subscription per county we would have a good chance to break even. We would also double the present circulation. There's no promotion fund lying around to be used, and there is no staff to do the selling. But there are enough willing spirits, we believe, to aid mightily in the process. We'll make samples and circulars available free in reasonable quantities. Send us a post-card.

Tripp on Town and Country Church

• Recently Thomas Alfred Tripp wrote to ministers of the Congregational Christian Churches a letter about the periodical, TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, that included the following:

"I believe city ministers will want it to keep up with the town and country field. It is a necessary tool for the rural minister's work."

Book Reviews

Rebuilding Rural America. By Earle Hitch. Harper and Bros., New York. 1950. $3.50.

Mr. Hitch starts his book by saying that "next to the war, the peril most dreaded on this side of the Atlantic is an economic sag accompanied by widespread unemployment."

Because agricultural mechanization with its consequent economic changes is pushing more and more people off the land and drawing them to the larger towns and cities in an effort to seek gainful employment, the author believes that efforts to stabilize rural employment and to enrich the small communities of America should be one of our major goals.

Many experiments in rural enterprise and educational programs are taking place. In order to present authentic information about these "laboratories of rural survival," the author, who was formerly a newspaper reporter and publisher, spent four years in travel and research. In *Rebuilding Rural America,* specific projects in sixteen states and several Canadian provinces are reported. Among them are Penn Craft, Pa.; Tupelo, Miss.; Bloomington, Ill.; Granger, Ia.; Alpine and Big Lick, Tenn.; Brasstown and Bricks, N. C.; Antigonish, Nova Scotia. There are many others. Each is pioneering in its own particular way to rescue the country church and the family farm and to expand rural occupations.

In a personal letter Mr. Hitch tells us that of all the work being done for rural betterment he admires most those projects he "found in charge of the courageous and extremely able country pastors." He hopes *Rebuilding Rural America* will "help in stimulating many others to follow the fine examples of the few."

What has been done in some communities, other communities can do, says the author, for "rural institutions, like the crossroads church and the family farm, are doomed unless new kinds of rural enterprise are introduced to provide jobs for the people who prefer to live and work in the country."

This book of "new designs for community life" is the most extensive report to date on existing projects in rural betterment.

—Ruth B. Robinson

Out of the Earth. By Louis Bromfield. Harper & Bros., New York. 1950. $4.00.

Year by year Malabar Farm has grown steadily richer and lovelier since Louis Bromfield first told the world in *Pleasant Valley* how a tract of land in his native Ohio was reclaimed and made to bloom. *Out of the Earth* is the third book the owner and author has written about his farm and it is the most technical one of the trio. Here the owner tells in detail what was done, and how, to reclaim the many hundred acres of his Ohio farm and make them so productive.

This book was written at the request of the thousands of practical farmers who visit Malabar each year, and the author proves conclusively that "a good farmer has to know more about more things than any man in any profession now practiced." *Out of the Earth* is a practical book about the New Agriculture and new scientific discoveries. Soil deficiencies, ways of detecting them, and methods of remedying them are described in detail; plant and animal needs are dealt with comprehensively.

The author writes with enthusiasm and understands what has been accomplished on his own land. He has the gift of making the reader feel his own sense of excitement about the earth and all that grows out of it, and writes in a way which compels the interest of not only the farmer but of all those who love nature and country living.

Although Mr. Bromfield criticizes government agencies and laboratory scientists in a somewhat dogmatic way one has the feeling that he has received practical help from some divisions of the Department of Agriculture and a few schools of agriculture.

The author's farm in Ohio has been "not only wonderful but profitable," he says, and he has recently acquired a large tract of land near Wichita Falls, Texas, also called "Malabar Farm." Perhaps Mr. Bromfield's next book will be about his most recent project.

—R. B. R.

That Darned Minister's Son. By Haydn S. Pearson. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y. 1950. $3.00.

Haydn Pearson's father was a farmer as well as a minister and "one of those rare men who believed every other human being was human and kind." As a result, his son says, "everyone was honest and kind to father."

Glenrose Farm in Hancock, New Hampshire, where the author of this book grew up, had 120 acres—"close to thirty acres in orchard, from ten to fifteen cows, pigs and chickens." From the time the boy was twelve, he milked his share of the cows night and morning and walked a mile and a half to the district school.

This is a collection of a man's reminiscences of his boyhood in a farm parsonage—amusing tales of his pranks, of banned reading in hideaways, of the party telephone line, of his love of good country food. The tales abound, too, in glowing descriptions of farm life and the warm and genuine neighborliness of country living.

—R. B. R.

The Community and Christian Education. By Tilford T. Swearingen. The Bethany Press, St. Louis, Mo. 1950. $2.00.

In 1947 a conference was held in Columbus, Ohio, on The Community and Religious Education. Initiated by the International Council of Religious Education, the conference was co-sponsored by the Home Missions Council of North America. This book is an interpretation of that conference rather than a report of it.

Believing that the ecumenical spirit it will be vital only when it becomes a reality in the local community, religious educators faced together the professional responsibility in terms

the community. This book interprets their thoughts and concerns with considerable insight. It is true to the spirit of the conference but, best of all, it becomes a guide and provides the essential resource materials for action on the community level.

In this day of collectivism no church can stand alone. It will either be overpowered by the great collective forces of evil or it will join hands with other churches in the cause of righteousness. Education is one of the areas demanding united action. If we are to establish a Christian culture, religious education must carry the Christian concepts into every aspect of community life.

Those who are looking for help in such an educational task will find *The Community and Christian Education* highly stimulating and suggestive. It will be of particular value to those leaders in small communities, for here the social structure is less complicated and provides a more direct approach.

—Don F. Pielstick

Poems of Edwin Markham. Edited by Charles L. Wallis. Harper & Brothers, New York. 1950. $2.75.

Four days before the 20th century opened, a San Francisco newspaper published a poem by a California schoolteacher entitled, "The Man With The Hoe." Soon it was discussed throughout the nation.

The poem was written some time earlier, when Edwin Markham had seen in Scribner's magazine a copy of Jean Francois Millet's painting of the toiler. An art critic said once that the painting revealed not only the cry of the toiler, but also the cry of the soil. It was only a black and white print, but it haunted the mind of the poet. "I could hear Christ crying out from that ruin of a man."

Edwin Markham also wrote "The Angelus" after brooding over Millet's picture of the same name, and "The Sower" for the same reason.

H. L. Mencken wrote that "The Man With The Hoe" was the greatest poem ever written in America. A number of the passionate poems in this volume are by Markham, the prophet. He was for a time a voice in the social gospel movement. He was greatly influenced by Swedenborg. His faith in God was experienced—it was not studious theology.

The many religious poems in this book reveal both his faith in God and his love of men. Edwin Markham had, as the editor points out, the "capacity for experiencing life poetically."

—Benson Y. Landis

Horace Plunkett. By Margaret Digby. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1950. $3.00.

Sir Horace Plunkett was a versatile man who was always hatching schemes. Once he got the ear of Theodore Roosevelt. T. R. liked Sir Horace's mind, and thereafter implemented some of the schemes. T. R. thought it would be good to send Sir Horace a letter of appreciation. The American President sent it to the British Foreign Secretary who hesitated to transmit it because it might create a precedent. Meanwhile *Wallace's Farmer* got hold of the letter and printed it. Then questions were asked in the House of Commons, embarrassing the Foreign Secretary. Soon the winds blew over, but the roars of T. R. have unfortunately never been recorded.

Miss Digby, who is the able secretary of the Horace Plunkett Foundation, London, calls Sir Horace "an Anglo-American Irishman." He inherited a large fortune and among other things was for many years the operator of a ranch in Wyoming. His greatest monument, in this reviewer's opinion, is the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, which encourages, to this day, the formation of cooperatives among Irish farmers.

Gifford Pinchot said that Sir Horace stimulated all of T. R.'s important rural policies, including those resulting in the Country Life Commission. Sir Horace did not like the wording of the report of 1909, but approved the purpose and the spirit.

Sir Horace was a Protestant who became an organizer of Roman Catholic farmers. He tried to be a mediator among Irish political factions. One reward was that his beautiful home was dynamited one night. But he went on and on. His secretary for a time was Gerald Heard, whose writings are now read by many American Protestants. Mr. Heard says that Sir Horace was a most sensitive man who, however, "could, because of a certain highly-developed critical faculty, never wholly believe in either side."

Sir Horace was the prime mover in the establishment of a department of agriculture in the government of Ireland, and was also a member of Parliament. He lived a life of public service.

—B. Y. L.

Dale W. Medearis

• Dale W. Medearis is the new national director of town and country church work for the Disciples of Christ, succeeding Edwin L. Becker who resigned in May of this year.

Born and reared on a farm, Mr. Medearis is a farmer at heart and knows farm people. His grandfather, great grandfather and great-great grandfather were Christian ministers.

Dale Medearis attended Phillips University for three years, majoring in Bible. He then transferred to Texas Christian University and received his A.B. degree in 1943 and his B.D. degree in 1946. He has held pastorates in Texas and Georgia, the most recent one being in Waycross, Ga.

Announcement Regarding the 1950 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country

The Place and Time: Columbia, Missouri, November 7-9, 1950.

Program: A printed program is available on application to your Board of Home Missions or the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Registration Fee: A registration fee of $1.00 will be charged to help carry the expense of the Convocation. This is paid when you register at Missouri Methodist Church, 9th and Locust Streets, Columbia.

Reservation of Rooms in Homes: If you wish a room in a home, *please make application in advance,* mailing this to Professor Vladimir E. Hartman, Bible College of Missouri, Columbia, Mo. The Bible College cannot be responsible for any request received later than October 27, 1950.

Who May Attend: Everyone interested in the town and country church.

Bob Zigler Calls

• Rev. M. R. Zigler, who represents the Church of the Brethren in Europe, has called at the office of the Committee on Town and Country while on a visit to the U.S.A. It is his hope that a number of people interested in the church and rural life will wish to tour rural communities in Europe the summer of 1952.

It would be practical, he thinks, to charter a bus to meet a group coming by boat to a continental port, and then go to rural churches, agricultural colleges, country schools, theological seminaries, etc., in Holland, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland. Since the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. will be establishing headquarters in Rome, a visit to that office should be included.

Zigler and ye editor hope that a tour such as is sketched could close with an international seminar on the church and rural life at an appropriate point, possibly Geneva. The travel plus the international conference should give perspective, new information and inspiring contacts.

When plans develop, they will be announced in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Hiwassee Seminar

• Those sharing in the seventh annual Hiwassee Seminar were challenged to expand their horizons, broaden their sympathies and enlarge their visions as graphic word pictures were painted of how town and country relationships have been and are changing.

Dr. Carl Taylor, U.S. Department of Agriculture official, said: "The cities have people by millions who were born and reared on farms. They have rural values but live by city habits, thus combining rural and urban ways. Urban traits, habits, customs, and values have increasingly flowed into rural areas. Easy channels of transportation and communication brought world and urban news and things into rural life. Many country people today are little different from town people.

"Ever-increasing numbers of persons do both farm and non-farm work. Many urban-employed move into the country and do some farming. Many others move into the country as residents even though they do no farming. In some areas many full-time farmers live in small towns and drive out to their farms.

"Institutions are gradually shifting their geographic location in response to these trends. Consolidated schools are locating in intermediate towns. In large cities or towns farmers still are strangers. Churches are slow in the shift but are following the trend. Rural (open-country churches) are declining in number and strength. Some are moving into towns. In a greater number of cases, members are shifting their membership to town churches."

This rapidly changing picture makes it imperative that we give attention to Dr. Taylor's conclusion: "Town and country people are steadily becoming more inter-related. Their awareness and conscious purposes should be out in front instead of lagging behind these trends."

—AARON H. RAPKING

City Rector is Flying Eagle

• George L. Fitzgerald, rector of the Church of St. James the Apostle in New Haven (Westville), Conn., spent his 1949 summer vacation among the Sioux Indians in South Dakota. Piloting his own plane, he helped with the ministerial work among the Sioux of seven reservations, covering an area of some 77,500 square miles. Mr. Fitzgerald says that this was "one of the happiest vacations" of his life. He tells about it in detail in a recent issue of *Forth,* 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Father, Pour Thy Spirit

GORDON LEECH, JR.

(Tune—Evening Prayer—"Savior, Breathe an Evening Blessing")

Father, pour thy Spirit on us,
As thy rain on crops doth fall.
Fill our thirsty souls with gladness
As we for thy mercy call.

Father, grant us warmth of spirit,
As thy sun doth heat provide.
Turn Thy light upon our pathway
That we never turn aside.

Father, hearts lie bare before Thee
Fallow as the upturned sod.
Plant Thy seed and so enrich us
That we fruitful be, O God.